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POLAND: Problems With Youth

The concern of officials of the Polish Church [redacted] about possible violent resistance by Polish youth to martial law may be overdrawn, but it does highlight the almost total alienation of the younger generation. [redacted]

The officials reportedly believe that young Poles are on the verge of "exploding" and that there could be outbreaks of violence. The party is so concerned about its relations with the younger generation that it has scheduled a Central Committee plenum in the near future to discuss the matter. [redacted]

Martial law hit hardest at Poland's younger generation. The drive for reform by Solidarity and its allies in student and agricultural circles was a revolt led primarily by this generation against the inefficient and corrupt system created and tolerated by their elders. [redacted]

Resistance activities since the imposition of martial law generally have involved the young. Rebellious acts by high school students have included the printing and distribution of leaflets and the formation of small and ineffective resistance groups. [redacted]

University students are more of a problem, and the authorities have moved cautiously to remove some popular and liberal rectors and professors. The regime's apprehension was demonstrated earlier this week when the military authorities had to threaten to close Warsaw University to prevent a strike. [redacted]

Comment: Although students have seemed increasingly willing to test the limits of martial law, most realize the futility of protest and fear the brutality of the security services and the loss of jobs. In the event of a clash, they probably could not count on help from the workers. [redacted]

The party, which has little to offer young people and cannot meet either their economic or political aspirations, will continue to rely on the threat of force. The Central Committee plenum probably will produce nothing more than platitudes. [redacted]

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